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THE VERSIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT¹

This little book by Professor Margolis, editor-in-chief of the new Jewish Version of the Old Testament, is a popular presentation of the main facts with regard to the history of translations of the Hebrew Scriptures. The subjects discussed are the Targum, the Septuagint and the later Greek versions, ancient Christian translations, Jewish translations in the Middle Ages, Luther and the King James's Version, modern translations by Jews and Christians, agencies for circulating the Bible, and the difficulties inherent in all Bible translations. In the discussion of the older versions no new facts are presented, but a discriminating and interesting statement is given of the results of modern critical research. Jewish tradition is cited rather more frequently than is necessary, and the author does not always make sufficiently clear the untrustworthy character of this tradition. Another weakness from a scientific point of view is the failure to exhibit the relation of the official text of the Sopherim to the earlier text of the Old Testament, and to indicate the relation of the ancient versions to the earlier text or to the text of the Sopherim, respectively. It is nowhere stated, for instance, that the uncorrected Septuagint bears witness to a far earlier text than that translated by the Vulgate. In the use of the versions, as well as of manuscripts, everything depends upon their genealogical relation to one another. This relation is not brought out clearly in the present discussion.

The most interesting parts of the book are the discussions of mediæval and modern Jewish versions. This field is little known to Christians, since the information is found only in inaccessible technical works, mostly in German. Here the author is thoroughly at home, and he makes a lot of out-of-the-way knowledge accessible to the ordinary reader. The description of the methods of the editors of the recently published Jewish Version throws light upon an important undertaking that is destined to exert great influence in the history of Judaism.

A delightful feature of this book is the cordial appreciation on the part of its Jewish author of the service rendered both by Christianity and by Islam in the dissemination of the message of the Hebrew Scriptures. He quotes with approval the words of Maimonides that through the two daughter-religions the words of the Torah have been spread to the utmost isles and to many nations. The seventh chapter is devoted

¹ *The Story of Bible Translations*. By Max L. Margolis. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917. 135 pages. \$0.75.

mainly to an account of the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society and of the American Bible Society, through which the Old Testament has been translated into nearly every language of the world, and the message of Israel's prophets has been preached to every nation.

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A HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF MILLENNIALISM¹

Everyone is aware of the widespread revival of millenarian ideas which has resulted from the war, but scholars have been too much inclined to take up a merely supercilious attitude toward the movement. The futility of these crude speculations is self-evident to them, and they fail to understand the difficulties of many earnest men, by no means wanting in intelligence, who have not their background of historical knowledge. Professor Case has done a notable service by discussing the whole question in a serious way and enabling the ordinary reader to put himself at the point of view of the modern scholar. He rightly feels that millenarianism must no longer be ignored as a harmless vagary. It is already distracting large numbers of men and women from the real problems which are urgently awaiting the church in these momentous times, and the mischief is bound to grow unless it is counteracted by a better instruction. The professional scholar has here a rare opportunity of doing something practical for the religious life of the country.

The method adopted in the book is "to sketch the origins of the millennial type of hope, to note the functions it has served at different times in the past, and in the light of its history to estimate its value as a modern program for the renovation of the world." The introductory chapter deals with the hope as it first emerges in gentile mythologies. It is shown that in Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and to some extent in Greek, religion we meet with the conception of a series of world-periods during which the conflict between good and evil powers passes through varying phases. The second chapter is occupied with the development of this mode of thought in the Old Testament and the Jewish apocalypses, and the two following chapters with the different forms which it assumed in the earlier and the later history of Christianity. In a closing chapter the results of the investigation are summed up and

¹*The Millennial Hope: A Phase of War-Time Thinking.* By Shirley Jackson Case. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918. ix+253 pages. \$1.25.